

THE ORIGIN, ORGANIZATION AND CEREMONIES OF
THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES.

(With Map.)

BY R. H. MATHEWS, L. S.,
CORRES. MEMB. ANTHROP. SOC., WASHINGTON.*(Read October 5, 1900.)*

In this article it is proposed in the first place to give a short outline of the probable origin of the native tribes of Australia. Then will follow the evolution of their social laws regulating intersexual relations. A cursory reference will next be made to the initiation ceremonies, but only so far as to suggest their development. A comprehensive map will be added showing the geographic distribution of the different systems of intermarrying divisions throughout Australia, together with the boundaries within which the customs of circumcision and splitting the male urethra are in operation.

Having traveled very largely in all the Australian colonies during the last quarter of a century, in the avocation of a surveyor, as well as in grazing and mining pursuits, I have had unusual facilities for observing the customs of the aborigines, and it is hoped that the result of my researches may be found of some value for ethnographic and geographic purposes.

ORIGIN.

The origin of the aboriginal races of Australia is a subject of high and enduring interest to students of anthropology in all parts of the world; and for this reason I am tempted to submit, in as brief a form as possible, certain views at which I have arrived in regard to the peopling of the mainland of Australia and the adjacent island of Tasmania.

In attempting the solution of this difficult problem it is necessary to call in the aid of different branches of science, among which geography, comparative linguistics, zoology, botany and geology take a prominent part. Owing to the antiquity of the Australian continent, and the consequent absence of written history, it becomes necessary at the outset to propound a theory which will hold the ground, reaching far back into prehistoric times, and then to examine how this hypothesis fits in with facts observed at the present day.

It will be assumed that in a former period the physical geography of the Australian continent was different to what it is now. Geological investigations show that different portions of Australia have been under water in succession more than once, or have been alternately sea and land. The mainland of Africa and Asia at one time had a comparatively unbroken continuity southeasterly as far as Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea. Probably the extension reached farther to the south and east, but the limits mentioned will be sufficient for the present discussion. A great part of this continent—which has been called Lemuria, because it is supposed that there the lemurs had their centre of development—now lies under the Indian Ocean, but its former existence is proved by hydrographic surveys which indicate by the banks and shoals now under water where this great land was situated. Dr. Blanford has endeavored to show that it was over this lost continent that many of the older Indian animals traveled into Africa. And it is stated by Sir J. D. Hooker, the eminent botanist, that a large assemblage of blossoming plants characteristic of the Indian Peninsula are also inhabitants of tropical Australia.

The first inhabitants who were dispersed over the continent referred to were a black race of the Negroid type. They were not necessarily homogeneous, because in moving southward and eastward people of neighboring tracts of country would to some extent mix with each other by conquest or for purposes of mutual advantage, and their language and customs would be modified in certain particulars. These people form the primitive stock from which the original inhabitants of Australia, Papua and Tasmania have sprung. It is immaterial to our present purpose whether the cradle of the human race was in Asia, in Africa or in the now submerged region of Lemuria.

This primitive race spread southeasterly with comparative ease, advancing slowly because its members were not numerous and the tropical character of the country passed through made food abundant and easily obtained. It is not to be expected that the people would all keep together, or travel at the same rate. They would divide into clans or small communities, some moving on in one direction or along particular natural features—others proceeding in other directions—others perhaps remaining stationary for long periods in favorable localities. Useful arts would be developed more in some of these tribes than in others, resulting from the

character of the country occupied and their general surroundings.

Some of the southerly branches of this wave of population marched into Australia at various places on what is now the northern coast of the continent, from whence they spread over the greater part of Australia, continuing their course into Tasmania, which at that period formed one mainland, and became what may be called the autochthonous race. Northern branches of the same human stream passed into New Guinea, New Caledonia, Melanesia and Polynesia in the same way. That the race spread far and wide is evidenced by the extensive distribution of its remnants. In the speech of the present occupants of these lands traces of an original stock language can be detected. A language can adopt and create as many words as it pleases, without changing its character or altering its peculiar construction. Comparative philology must be studied side by side with comparative ethnology. Moreover, in their skeletal structure and general osteology the autochthones of Australia resemble the African negroes and Melanesians, or perhaps present a still more primitive type.

Such a migration as that outlined in the foregoing paragraphs continued for a period of prolonged duration—how long it is needless to speculate upon here. One tide of population would be succeeded by others at irregular intervals, who would naturally follow the pioneers, or advance guard, much in the same way that the settlement of countries takes place at present, detachments entering Australia at different points along the whole length of the northern coast. It may be reasonably expected that the dialects and customs of the later immigrants would differ in some respects from those of their precursors, owing to their arrival at long intervals during successive ages.

Instead of being one race, they were probably a mixture of several races of the same primitive type. It is likely that the numerical strength of a clan or family would be small, and if they kept by themselves for any considerable time the dialect of each would be modified. A number of such small clans being distributed century after century over such a large continent as Australia would account for the immense variety of different dialects we find spoken by the present inhabitants. This diversity of speech probably led to perpetual hostility and distrust among petty tribes, and so kept them separate. The existence of extensive arid tracts in many

parts of Australia necessitated migrations in search of water, and this furnishes another factor in the wide distribution of the people.

In process of time the original race was followed by hostile tribes of a more advanced type and possessing a higher degree of culture. Depressions and elevations of the land due to volcanic agencies and other disturbances of the earth's crust, and the consequent incursions of the sea, would in the interval have effected changes in the relative position of sea and land, and have completely altered the boundaries of continents and oceans. The connection between Australia, Asia, Lemuria and Africa had been more or less submerged, but there was still a comparatively uninterrupted land-route between India and Australia via Ceylon, Nicobar and Andaman Islands, Malay Peninsula, Java, Borneo, Celebes and Timor.

The second migration, like the first, would continue to march into Australia in small detached bands for a long period. In cases where the two races met and came into conflict in regard to the possession of country or otherwise, the new people, being better equipped for warfare, would subjugate the local inhabitants—the autochthonous race—and the customs, dialects and ceremonies of the latter would be assimilated or to some extent superseded by those of their conquerors. In this way most of the mainland of Australia was overrun by the invaders, but they did not reach Tasmania, because it had by that time become an island owing to the submergence of a tract of land now occupied by Bass' Strait.

There is nothing unreasonable in the assumption that these invaders and the native tribes of the southern portion of India are the descendants of a common stock—the Australians, owing to their long isolation, having retained the primitive character of their Neanderthaloid ancestors, while the later Indian tribes have attained a higher grade of evolution. Philologists have, however, failed to definitely connect the Australian tongues with the wild races of Southern India.

The Malay race, in my opinion, never invaded any part of Australia. During historic times they visited the northern coast in canoes or catamarans for the purpose of fishing for trepang, but their intercourse with the Australians was restricted to the coast and was very slight. Even if a few individuals occasionally intermarried with the Australians and went inland among the tribes, they made no deep impression either upon the race or the language.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION.

In examining the structure of Australian tribes it is found that they possess fixed laws for regulating marital relations. In some cases these laws are of a simple character and consist of the elders of the tribe allotting the progeny of certain women to be the wives of certain men; in other cases the community is segregated into *two* primary groups or phratries, the men of the one group marrying the women of the other, with a reciprocal obligation. In some tribes each of these two primary groups is bisected, making *four* intermarrying divisions. Among certain tribes of the northern portion of Australia, we find that each phratry or group is subdivided into four sections, thus making *eight* divisions of the community. These tribal divisions have been called Social Organizations or Systems, and an attempt will now be made to briefly explain their development among Australian tribes.

In portions of Australia, widely separated from each other, among which may be mentioned part of the southern coast of South Australia, part of the west coast of Western Australia and the southeastern coastal districts of Victoria and New South Wales, we discover that the intermarriage of the individuals of a tribe is of the simple character referred to in the beginning of the last paragraph. In some respects these people differ in physical type, in weapons, in language and in their ceremonies, from the natives of other parts of Australia, but resemble in several particulars the inhabitants of Tasmania, which favors the theory already enunciated in this essay in regard to their common origin.

The old men assemble in council at irregular periods, and as often as may be necessary, for the purpose of appointing certain young married women to be what is termed *tooar* to certain boys, and such boys are likewise called *tooar* to these women. Care is taken that the parties appointed *tooar* to each other are not closely related by ties of blood. The boys are thenceforth forbidden to speak to, or even to look at, these women; and the latter are subject to a similar ban in regard to the boys. For example, if one of the women bears a daughter she gives such child, when old enough, to the young man to whom she herself is *tooar*; and if he has a sister he is supposed to give her to one of the woman's sons in exchange for his own wife. These two men would therefore stand in the mutual relationship of brothers-in-law.

A woman who is *tooar* to a man may die before she bears a daughter—or such daughter although born may die before the intended husband gets her—therefore to neutralize the chances of a man not securing a wife, more than one woman is usually appointed *tooar* to the same man. On the other hand, one woman may be appointed *tooar* to several young men. If the man to whom her daughter has been betrothed dies before he is old enough to claim her, she then becomes the wife of one of the other men. These rules may be further illustrated as follows: Lizzie, a married woman, is *tooar* to Sam, Tommy and Jack, precedence being in the order named. If Lizzie gives birth to a daughter this child will eventually become the wife of Sam. Should he, however, die before the girl reaches puberty, she would be taken by Tommy as his spouse. But if Tommy had also died then she would fall to the lot of Jack. Each of the young men named may have several married women occupying the position of *tooar* to them, to increase their chances of obtaining a wife.

An unmarried girl on attaining puberty may be assigned to the position of *tooar* in the same manner as a married woman. On her obtaining a husband her daughters eventually become the wives of the men who are entitled to claim them. This *tooar* relationship precludes the possibility of a man having sexual intercourse or any intimacy with any woman who might ultimately become his mother-in-law. A man and woman who are *tooar* to each other theoretically occupy the positions of son-in-law and mother-in-law, and the same restrictions as to mutual avoidance of each other apply in both cases alike. A man may have more than one wife, but each of them must be the daughter of a woman who is *tooar* to him. In making the *tooar* appointments the old men endeavor, as far as practicable, to arrange that the brothers and sisters in certain families shall marry the brothers and sisters in certain other families. The offspring follow the lineage of the father, and also adopt his *totem* in most cases.

In ascertaining what woman is qualified to be *tooar* to a certain boy, A, the old men, who are well acquainted with the genealogy of the people around them, know that A's father is B. They next discuss the question who are the cousins of B. These cousins, whom we shall distinguish as C, may be the offspring either of B's father's sisters, or of his mother's brothers. There will probably be several of such cousins, some in each of the lines of descent just mentioned,

from among whom the old men will select one or more to exercise the function of becoming the parent of A's future wife. Let C¹, one of the cousins of A's father, be a woman who has been thus chosen; then she is *tooar* to A, because he will by and by marry one of her daughters. The old men may also appoint the mother of A, or some other woman occupying the same position in the genealogy, to be *tooar* to the sons of C¹.

I am led to the assumption that the original or autochthonous race possessed a somewhat similar organization to that just described, and that the tribes under reference escaped subjugation by the invading races, either because the latter were not able to overcome them, or because they did not spread sufficiently far south and west as to come in contact with the original people.

In going into regions adjoining those with which I have been dealing, we encounter tribes possessing two intermarrying phratries such as Mattiri and Kararu of Port Lincoln; Krokitch and Kamatch of Western Victoria; Muckwarra and Keelparra of the Barkunjee tribes; Koolpirro and Tinnawa of the Yowerawarrika people, and so on. As I was the first author who reported the two divisions of the last mentioned tribe,¹ I shall proceed to deal with them as typical of the others.

The Yowerawarrika and allied tribes in the southeast corner of Queensland are divided, as I have before stated, into two phratries called Koolpirro and Tinnawa. The natives have told me several legends respecting ancestral warriors, and I have noticed that the most valiant and distinguished men were always said to belong to the Koolpirro division. This led me to think that Koolpirro was probably the name of a warlike tribe or clan in the remote past which had conquered the Tinnawa, an adjoining people, and that each of these tribes or clans originally possessed the *tooar* type of marriage laws.

If we assume that this was so, and that the victors followed the present practice of killing all the adult males, but sparing the women, together with the little boys and girls, the Koolpirro men, whether already married or not, would take one or more of the women of the vanquished Tinnawa tribe as wives. As the Koolpirro men would already have children by their own women, their offspring by the strange women would require to be distinguished from the

¹ *Journ. Roy. Soc. N. S. Wales*, vol. xxxiii, p. 108.

rest, and a very easy way of doing this would be to call them after their mothers, Tinnawa. When the young lads whose lives had been spared at the time of the slaughter of their fathers grew up to maturity, they would take some of their wives from among the Koolpirro women, and distinguish them by the latter name. Or in other words the Koolpirro men would give their sisters to the Tinnawa men in exchange for their sisters as wives. This would account for the origin of the two phratries Koolpirro and Tinnawa, as illustrated in the following table :

TABLE NO. 1.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| A | Koolpirro | Tinnawa | Tinnawa |
| B | Tinnawa | Koolpirro | Koolpirro |

Instead of the conquerors killing off all the males in the way just stated, it is customary in many places for two hostile families to make peace by the exchange of wives. This practice was much in vogue among the tribes on the Barwon river and its tributaries in New South Wales, whose customs I had exceptional opportunities of observing when stationed in those districts surveying government lands during the years from 1871 to 1880. I have also witnessed this usage among tribes in Queensland, and in the Northern Territory of South Australia.

It may be postulated that in ancient times the Koolpirro men gave their wives to the Tinnawa men in exchange for the wives of the latter, in order to terminate existing feuds, or for the purpose of resisting a common foe. A man of the Koolpirro tribe, for example, would of course have a Koolpirro wife and Koolpirro children. He would give his wife to a Tinnawa man, and her children by the new husband would be called Koolpirro the same as before. This interchange of wives might be only temporary, or it might continue during that generation. But in the rising generation the Koolpirro men would take their wives from the sisters of the Tinnawa men, and conversely the same as at present.

It is seen by Table No. 1 that the resulting offspring in both cases inherit the phratry name of their mother. They are also generally distinguished by her *totem*; thus, if the mother be an iguana, her children of both sexes will be iguanas. This rule is not universal, however, for I have found tribes possessing a dual divi-

sion on the same principle as the Yowerawarrika, where the children took the *totem* of the father.

Strength is given to the hypothesis of the coalescence of two tribes by the fact that in an adjoining community, the Barkunjee, we discover the phratry name Keelparra, evidently a dialectic modification of Koolpirro, which indicates that the tribe of that name in olden times was widespread, and perhaps powerful. Among the Barkunjee, however, Keelparra marries Muckwarra, the latter probably being the name of another vanquished or allied tribe occupying different territory, and the two phratries became Keelparra and Muckwarra.

We will now try to account for the introduction of the organization containing *four* divisions. The Warkeemon community in north-eastern Queensland, first reported by me in 1898,¹ is divided into four sections called respectively Koopungie, Karpungie, Kellungie and Cheekungie. Perhaps each of these names represented a small independent tribe or clan in former times, having the *tooar* system of relationship. To avoid repetition let us assume that Koopungie and Karpungie became incorporated either by conquest or otherwise, and intermarried on the same principle as Koolpirro and Tinawa already dealt with. We will also suppose that Kellungie and Cheekungie amalgamated in a similar manner, and intermarried one with the other. This can be made clear by means of Tables Nos. 2 and 3, which will also show how the children were called, for distinction, by the same name as their mother in each case :

TABLE NO. 2.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| A | Koopungie | Karpungie | Karpungie |
| B | Karpungie | Koopungie | Koopungie |

TABLE NO. 3.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| A | Kellungie | Cheekungie | Cheekungie |
| B | Cheekungie | Kellungie | Kellungie |

We will now assume that the Koopungie and Karpungie confederacy (Table No. 2) subjugated the Kellungie and Cheekungie confederacy (Table No. 3) ; or that these two peoples thought it

¹ *Journ. Roy. Soc. N. S. Wales*, vol. xxxii, pp. 250, 251.

prudent and politic to amalgamate for the purposes of mutual defense. This alliance could have been easily accomplished by the interchange of wives between the members of the opposite confederacies. Koopungie could have taken the wife of Kellungie and could have given his own wife to a Kellungie man. Cheekungie and Karpungie could have exchanged wives in a similar manner, but there was no alteration made in the names of the offspring in any case. For example, the children of a Koopungie man were distinguished as Karpungie the same as before the coalition and so on, as in the following table, a careful perusal of which will make my meaning more clear:

TABLE NO. 4.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| A | { | Koopungie | Cheekungie | Karpungie |
| | | Kellungie | Karpungie | Cheekungie |
| B | { | Cheekungie | Koopungie | Kellungie |
| | | Karpungie | Kellungie | Koopungie |

In examining the above table, together with the two preceding ones, it will be observed that a man, Koopungie, of the A phratry in Table No. 2 marries a woman, Cheekungie, of the B phratry in Table No. 3, and *vice versa*; and that a Karpungie man of the B phratry in Table No. 2 marries a woman, Kellungie, of the A phratry in Table No. 3, and *vice versa*. It is also seen that the people belonging to the two A phratries go together, and the two B phratries together in Table No. 4. That is to say, the men of the sections Koopungie and Kellungie of the A phratry in Table No. 4 marry the women of the two sections Cheekungie and Karpungie of phratry B in this new organization, and conversely. The men and women of the respective phratries are therefore mutually related as brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. It is therefore apparent that whether the organization consist of two divisions, as among the Yowerawarrika, or of four sections like the Warkeemon, the community still retains the two primary intermarrying phratries, A and B. Aggregates of *totems*, chosen from the fauna and the flora, are attached to each division.

It now remains to explain the probable origin of the present system of dividing a tribe into *eight* sections. If our theory is of any value it should hold good in this system as well as in that of four divisions already explained. The eight divisions of the

Wombya tribe, which I discovered and reported in the beginning of 1898,¹ will be used for illustration. The names of the sections are Choolum, Palyaringie, Cheenum, Bungaringie, Chingulum, Yacomary, Chooralum and Jamerum. We will commence with the first mentioned four of these names.

Choolum is the father of Palyaringie, and by referring back to the Yowerawarrika tribe it is seen that the children in that system take the name of the mother; therefore I shall assume that formerly the Choolum and Palyaringie clans became consolidated by conquest or otherwise, in the same way as the tribes we have been describing. A Choolum man married a Palyaringie woman, and *vice versa*, the children taking the name of the mother in both cases (Table No. 5). A similar incorporation took place between the Cheenum and Bungaringie clans (Table No. 6). Afterward these two confederacies amalgamated by interchanging their wives or sisters in the same manner as the Warkeemon people, thus transposing the intermarrying divisions, but leaving the names of the men's offspring the same (Table No. 7).

TABLE NO. 5.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| A | Choolum | Palyaringie | Palyaringie |
| B | Palyaringie | Choolum | Choolum |

TABLE NO. 6.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| A | Cheenum | Bungaringie | Bungaringie |
| B | Bungaringie | Cheenum | Cheenum |

TABLE NO. 7.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| A | { | Choolum | Bungaringie | Palyaringie |
| | | Cheenum | Palyaringie | Bungaringie |
| B | { | Bungaringie | Choolum | Cheenum |
| | | Palyaringie | Cheenum | Choolum |

We will now deal with the remaining four divisions of the Wombya tribe, namely, Chingulum, Yacomary, Chooralum and Jamerum. At the present day Chingulum is the father of Yacomary, and by again using the Yowerawarrika tribe as a basis, I will assume

¹PROC. AMER. PHILOS. SOC., PHILADA., Vol. xxxvii, pp. 151, 152.

that in former times the Chingulum and Yacomary clans became incorporated and intermarried one with the other, the offspring being distinguished by the name of their mothers (Table No. 8). Chooralum and Jamerum were similarly coalesced (Table No. 9). Subsequently these two confederacies became amalgamated in the same way as those represented in Table No. 7, the section name of each man's children remaining unchanged. (See Table No. 10).

TABLE NO. 8.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| B | Chingulum | Yacomary | Yacomary |
| A | Yacomary | Chingulum | Chingulum |

TABLE NO. 9.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| B | Chooralum | Jamerum | Jamerum |
| A | Jamerum | Chooralum | Chooralum |

TABLE NO. 10.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| B | { | Chingulum | Jamerum | Yacomary |
| | | Chooralum | Yacomary | Jamerum |
| A | { | Jamerum | Chingulum | Chooralum |
| | | Yacomary | Chooralum | Chingulum |

From eight separate tribes we have now illustrated the development of two communities, one represented by Table No. 7 and the other by Table No. 10, each of which has four intermarrying divisions in its social organization. At a later period these two communities, whether as the consequence of war or peace need not be considered, became consolidated into their existing form, and the course followed in arriving at this result will now be investigated.

A man of the Choolum section in Table No. 7 took the wife of a man belonging to the Jamerum section in Table No. 10; Cheenum took the wife of Yacomary; Jamerum of Table No. 10 took the wife of Cheenum in Table No. 7, and Yacomary took the wife of Choolum. All these men belong to the A phratries in their respective tribes. Again, a Chingulum man took the wife of a Bungaringie; Chooralum annexed Palyaringie's spouse; Bungaringie took Chooralum's wife and Palyaringie took the wife of Chingulum.

These four men belong to phratry B. The intermarrying sections of the new organization and those of the resulting offspring are as follows :

TABLE NO. 11.

| <i>Phratry.</i> | <i>Husband.</i> | <i>Wife.</i> | <i>Child.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| A | Choolum | Chingulum | Palyaringie |
| | Cheenum | Chooralum | Bungaringie |
| | Jamerum | Palyaringie | Chooralum |
| | Yacomary | Bungaringie | Chingulum |
| B | Chingulum | Choolum | Yacomary |
| | Chooralum | Cheenum | Jamerum |
| | Bungaringie | Yacomary | Cheenum |
| | Palyaringie | Jamerum | Choolum |

This redistribution of the wives of the men necessarily varies the brother-in-law relationships. The men of the Choolum section in Table No. 11 exchange sisters with the men of the Chingulum section ; the Cheenum men marry the sisters of the Chooralum men and *vice versa* ; the Bungaringie men and the Yacomary men exchange sisters as wives ; and lastly the Palyaringie and Jamerum men mutually intermarry with each other's sisters. In every case, however, the section name of each man's offspring remains as it was prior to the coalition—thus, Choolum's children are called Palyaringie the same as they appear in Table No. 7, and Palyaringie's progeny still retain the name of Choolum.

According to Table No. 11 the wife of Choolum should be a Chingulum woman, but by virtue of tribal custom he has the alternative of marrying a Chooralum. If he choose a Chingulum his children will be Palyaringie, but if he take a Chooralum wife the progeny will be Bungaringie, the section name of the offspring being regulated by the mother's division. A man of the Cheenum section, whose tabular wife is Chooralum, can marry a Palyaringie woman. In other words, the men of the pair of sections, Choolum and Cheenum, can exercise their choice of a spouse over the same two sections of women. Similar privileges are possessed by the men of the other pairs of sections, namely, Jamerum and Yacomary—Chingulum and Chooralum—and Bungaringie and Palyaringie, who can select their wives from either of the corresponding pairs of females in Table No. 11. Numbers of different totems are annexed to the divisions.

The theory of the coalition of a number of small tribes within the

area where the Wombya organization obtains is supported by the fact that in neighboring districts we discover that some of the sections appearing in Table No. 11 intermarry with others having an entirely different name, and the offspring are also differently designated. For example, in the Inchalachee tribe a Palyaringie man marries a Boonongoona, and the children are Boolangie. This could be accounted for by supposing that in former times the Palyaringie tribe became separated into two or more segments, one branch going into certain territory, whilst another branch traveled in a contrary direction, and that each branch ultimately became incorporated with different people, thus participating in the formation of diverse communities in which many of the section names are dissimilar. The same may be said of Bungaringie, who takes a Thimmemill spouse, and the progeny are Warkoo. On the Victoria river Chingulum marries a Chamaja woman and his children are Jambajunna; the wives and the offspring in each case being quite different to those in Table No. 11.

In examining the social structure of a large number of tribes, it is seen that certain section names seem to be more universal or persistent than others. For example, the name Chingulum, or its dialectic variations Jungulla, Changally, Kingulla, etc., is found in nearly every one of the tribes containing eight sections, from the Gulf of Carpentaria all the way across the Northern Territory, and extending onwards far into Western Australia. There is at the present day a tolerably numerous tribe named Chingalee who occupy a considerable tract of country between Daly waters and Newcastle waters in the Northern Territory. And although we cannot place too much reliance on the similarity of names, it is possible that this may be a remnant of the larger and more widespread nation from which the section name Chingulum has arisen.

The section name Cheenum, or its variants Jinaḡoo, Chanama, Chunainjah, Janna, etc., is also found among most of the communities in the country lying between the northwest corner of Queensland and Western Australia. This seems to justify the inference that at an earlier period there were, among others, two tribes called Chingulum and Cheenum, each of which were spread over an immense extent of country, and that they either conquered other tribes or were themselves subjugated, or otherwise became amalgamated with the people around them or with subsequent influxes from elsewhere, in the way I have endeavored to illustrate in prev-

ious pages, and so became scattered among a large number of different communities, as we find them at the present time.

In the foregoing pages I have endeavored to give a brief outline of the Social Organization of the Australian aborigines by tracing it through its various stages of development by means of examples taken from the marriage laws still in operation in different parts of the continent. Having studied this branch of the subject for many years, I am led to the conclusion that neither promiscuous sexual intercourse nor what has been called "communal or group marriage" has ever existed among Australian tribes. I feel equally clear that the system of divisions into sections was not devised for the purpose of preventing consanguineous marriages, but was developed in the way I have attempted to explain in this paper.

INITIATION CEREMONIES.

In my descriptions of the initiation ceremonies of various Australian tribes, which I have from time to time contributed to different learned societies, I have reported that there is a feigned quarrel between the fathers of the novices and the men who muster the latter out of the camp for the purpose of passing them through the ordeal of the inaugural ceremonial. I have also detailed how human blood is sprinkled upon stumps of trees; in other instances how it is collected in native vessels and eaten; and also how one or more of the men are killed to furnish a cannibalistic feast for the people present.

This has suggested to me that perhaps the ceremonies were considerably modified, if not originated, during the wars between the clans or tribes referred to in the chapter on "Social Organization." If all the adult males were killed, as at present, then it is reasonable to expect that the young captive boys would be brought up in conformity with the ancestral customs of their captors. For the purpose of doing this it would be necessary to remove them from the influence of their mothers, who would naturally cling to the customs of their forefathers and endeavor to bring up their sons with the same views.

If we investigate the procedure in the initiation ceremonies current at the present day, for an example of which the *Bora*¹ of the Kamilaroi tribe may be selected, we see that certain neighboring

¹ R. H. Mathews, "The Bora of the Kamilaroi Tribes," *Proc. Roy. Soc. Victoria*, Vol. ix, New Series, pp. 137-173.

tribes assemble at a common meeting ground and that the men of a distant tribe take charge of the novices of another people who are more or less strangers to them. We also observe that the novices are taken away from their mothers at daylight, the time that an aboriginal tribe always makes an attack on an enemy. The mothers of the boys are led to believe that an enemy really comes into the camp and bears off their sons in a mysterious manner. The women are prevented from seeing what actually takes place, owing to their being hidden under grass, bushes, rugs, bark, or other covering, but they hear what they believe to be the awful voice of the enemy and the trampling of his heavy footsteps.

In describing the Kamilaroi *Bora* I have stated that great sexual license is permitted to the men of the visiting tribes. In ordinary everyday life a man is restricted to women of a certain section or *totem*, but at meetings for initiation purposes these rules are much relaxed, and a man is allowed to have intercourse with women of different sections and degrees of affinity, who would be altogether forbidden to him on other occasions. At the *Bora* ceremonies, as soon as the novices and all their own men are out of sight, some men of the strange tribes remove the covering from off the women and take them away to another camp, where the men remain with them for the purpose of superintending the due performance of all the tribal regulations. The women are, in effect, prisoners during these proceedings.

All these elements of the ceremonial may be emblematical or commemorative of an early morning raid of one hostile tribe upon another in the distant past, one detachment of the men taking charge of the women, while another detachment takes the youths away to be instructed in the customs and traditions of their conquerors. The comparison becomes all the more realistic when we discover that during their sojourn in the bush with the old men the youths are shown many things which are entirely new to them. They are taught another language, known only to the initiated, which may be typical of the language of their subjugators; and even their own personal name is changed to another, which is kept a secret from their mothers and sisters and all the women of the tribe.

In native warfare, as already stated, the women are always preserved and taken as wives by the victorious party.¹ The sexual

¹ Several of the vanquished party usually escape by flight; they are chiefly active men, but young women often get away with them.

liberties to which I have referred probably had their archetype in the libidinous orgies which took place when a bevy of strange females was secured. The captors would make indiscriminate use of the women for some little time, until they had leisure to effect an individual distribution of them. This would take place as soon as the totems of the women and other particulars were ascertained. At the present day, when a woman is allotted to a man as his wife, she must first submit to copulation by a number of men, whose intercourse with her at other times would be a serious offense.

While the *kooringal* are marching off with the novices in their custody, two men called *buddenbelar* rush out of the scrub and each of them throws a boomerang at the aggressors. They then retreat hastily and go away to fetch the *beegay*, whose participation in the ceremony practically amounts to the rescue of the novices from the *kooringal*. This is suggestive of a time when a number of small tribes, occupying a large area, had been more or less friendly and helped each other against a common foe. If an onslaught were made upon any of these tribes such of the men who escaped would seek the protection and intervention of some of their allies who might be powerful enough to punish the offenders and liberate their sons. Such a rescue may be symbolized by the interference of the *beegay* at the present time, and the subsequent return of the novices to the *thurrawonga* camp during the *Bora*.

All the tribes who arrived in early times were probably small and lived in constant fear of surprisals by the people around them, so that it would be unwise for them to confide the details of their sacred ceremonies to the women, who might at any time be carried off by conquerors and the secrets exacted from them by coercion. This may have given rise to the existing custom of placing a covering over the women when the youths are being taken away.

It is a reasonable assumption that from the earliest period each band of adventurers brought certain rites with them. Owing to a superstitious adherence to former patriarchal customs, especially strong in all primitive peoples, we would not expect to find that any new system of initiation would altogether abrogate and supersede the older type, but would be blent or incorporated with it.

I am inclined to think that the plucking out of the hair—observed among the Narrinyeri and other tribes of South Australia, a part of the Barkunjee in New South Wales and among some of the Victorian tribes—has been handed down from the original inhabitants,

because analogous customs have been reported among Negroid people elsewhere.

As the Tasmanians have been assumed to be the remnant of the autochthonous race, some items of their initiatory customs may be mentioned. J. Bonwick, in referring to this subject, says:

“From all that I have been able to gather in my inquiries among very old residents of Van Diemen’s Land it is my opinion that the custom in connexion with young-men-making [initiation] in New Holland, existed more or less with the different tribes of the Tasmanians.”¹

J. J. de la Billardiére, speaking of his visits to the Tasmanians between the years 1791–1793, says:

“We observed some in whom one of the middle teeth of the upper jaw was wanting, and others in whom both were gone.”²

The same author says in another place:

“We were much surprised to see most of them holding the extremity of the prepuce with the left hand.”

In a vocabulary appended to his work he gives the native word *loira* for powdered charcoal, with which they covered their bodies. Among many Australian tribes one or more front teeth are punched out; in others the men take hold of their genitals and exhibit them to the youths; and the smearing of their bodies with powdered charcoal and grease is widely practiced in connection with initiation ceremonies.

Speaking of the corrobories or dances of the Tasmanians, J. Backhouse³ reports:

“In these dances the aborigines represented certain events or the manners of different animals; they had the emu dance, the thunder and lightning dance, and many others.”

R. H. Davies,⁴ in referring to the same subject, says:

“One is called the kangaroo dance, and is, along with some others, most violent. . . . Some of these dances are evidently lascivious.”

¹ *Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians* (London, 1870), p. 202.

² *Account of a Voyage in Search of La Pérouse* (London, 1800), Vol. ii, pp. 72 and 76.

³ *Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies* (London, 1843), p. 82.

⁴ *On the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land* (Launceston and London, 1846), Vol. ii, p. 416.

Restrictions respecting food,¹ similar in character to those in operation in Australia, have also been observed in Tasmania, some people being allowed to eat only the male, others only the female, of particular animals; whilst certain kinds of fish were forbidden to some tribes.

J. Bonwick² tells us of the use of the bullroarer in Tasmania: "The wise men, or doctors, . . . twirled round the magic *mooyumkarr*, an oval piece of wood with a string, . . . which must on no account be seen by females." He also states, at page 192 of the same work, that "circles have been recognized in the interior of Van Diemen's Land."

R. H. Davies³ reports that when "the males arrive at the age of puberty they are deeply scarified on the shoulders, thighs and muscles of the breast."

The few references herein made to the customs of the Tasmanians have been taken from the works of early writers which were published between thirty and a hundred years ago. It is likely that the great secrecy which surrounds the celebration of inaugural rites generally had the effect of precluding the white population from witnessing or reporting what was done on such occasions.

An attempt has been made in this paper to deduce the inception of many parts of the initiation ceremonies of Australian tribes from their conflicts of the past by showing their strong resemblance to what actually takes place in internecine wars among the natives of the present day. During the long isolation of tribes, or confederacies, special characteristics have developed, and modifications have resulted in accordance with varying circumstances, among the people of different districts, until the elaborate forms of the ceremonies as we now find them have been evolved.

EXPLANATION OF THE MAP.

As already stated, a tribe is divided into sections, which are known by distinguishing titles. If we travel through any considerable extent of territory we discover that the names of these divisions vary in different districts. In a certain tract of country the

¹ J. B. Walker, *Notes on the Aborigines of Australia* (Government Printer, Tasmania, 1898), p. 9.

² *Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians* (London, 1870), pp. 175, 176.

³ *Op. Cit.*, p. 412.

115

145

150

AU

SOUTH

10

0 100

15

15

I 16

PACIFIC

20

20

North West C. p. Cloutie

NSLAND

25

25

Shark Dirk Hartog Steep P. Gantheaume Hautman Roes

SOUTH

30

30

Wellington Bathurst

ES

35

35

C. Naumburg Sydney & Port Jackson Newenstone & Port Hunter

SOUTH

OCEAN

110

150

155



MAP SHOWING BOUNDARIES OF THE SEVERAL NATIONS OF AUSTRALIA.

